

GLOBAL BENCHMARK DATA POSITIONS AURORA
MANUFACTURER INTERNATIONALLY

ABOUT ASK PRODUCTS. ASK Power is a global manufacturer of electrical components for the utility and industrial marketplace. Based in Aurora, Illinois, the company has around 35 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. After several years measuring against an internal set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Steve Kase, Managing Director of ASK Power, had a good idea of how the business was tracking relative to its own performance. However, the company lacked a perspective on where it fell relative to the competition. ASK reached out to key customers for performance reporting according to quality and customer-specific deliverables, but required more targeted feedback to develop strategic, actionable improvement objectives.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Kase leveraged his relationship with the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC), part of the MEP National Network™, to undertake a global benchmark assessment for the organization. "As our trusted partner, I knew IMEC would be able to [help us] use the international benchmark to realize the level of industry data needed to be more strategic," said Kase. The Promoting Business Excellence assessment (PROBE) measured ASK's performance on a global level according to variety of functional objectives.

Kase and the ASK team used the assessment to align the company's departmental priorities with the best-of-the-best in the industry. "The benefit of the transformative assessment was that it truly helped us compare our performance to successful competitors," said Kase. "The sheer visibility of the areas where we are stronger than we need to be and those where we are weaker than ideal has been eye-opening and is unprecedented data for us." They found the greatest areas for improvement in human resources, accounting systems, new product development, and technology. The team's strategic focus on the workforce development generated buy-in and feedback throughout the organization for the company's ideal future state.

Following the PROBE assessment, ASK implemented an initiative to add new people, target new markets, and bring new products on board. The company provided workforce training and created new roles in technical sales and engineering. An investment in new product development secured a new collaborative partnership with an industry leader, yielding previously unattainable improvements in sales and technology growth.

"Our IMEC experience—historically, and this year—has been a major source of continuous process improvement, critical to our success."

-Steve Kase, Managing Director

RESULTS



\$5,000,000 investment in new products and technology



Created 3 new jobs



\$100,000 in cost savings



\$500,000 in new sales

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